

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 011287

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON NAIROBI MOGADISCIO
MOSCOW HAVANA FROM ADDIS ABABA DTD 15 JAN 1978 QTE

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 0214

E X D I S

. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, ET, UK, US

SUBJ: MOFA BLAST AT US AND UK; DISCUSSION WITH BRIT AMB

REF: (A) ADDIS ABABA 0212; (B) ADDIS ABABA 0211 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BRITISH AMBASSADOR IS RECOMMENDING FORMAL PROTEST
IN ADDIS OVER MOFA DISTORTION OF BRITISH POSITION IN SUPPORT
OF PRES CARTER'S STATEMENT ON HORN. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER,
THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED UNTIL FORSEC OWEN HAS IN
EFFECT HAD CHANCE TO MAKE ORIGINAL PROTEST TO MOFA PERSEC
DAWIT ON JAN 18 IN LONDON. BRITS AND WE ARE GIVING CONSIDER-
ATION TO DEALING MORE DIRECTLY WITH DIRG MEMBER IN CHARGE

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OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AS MOFA OFFICIALS SEEM INCREASINGLY TO
BE MERE CHANNELS OF REPORTING WITH LITTLE REAL EFFECT ON
POLICY. AMBASSADOR CANNOT CONCEIVE -- ALTHOUGH WE DO -- THAT
SOVIETS CAN POSSIBLY WANT WESTERN DIP MISSIONS ENTIRELY OUT
OF ETHIOPIA. REASON, HE GIVES, IS SOVIET NEED TO NOT OVERLY
FRIGHTEN OTHER AFRICANS. IDEA OF ENLISTING YUGOSLAV DIPLOMACY
IN WESTERN BEHALF APPEALS TO BOTH EMBASSIES.

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR DEREK DAY, WHOM I HAVE JUST SEEN, IS RECOMMENDING THAT HE BE AUTHORIZED TO MAKE OFFICIAL PROTEST TO EPMG OVER MOFA DISTORTION OF OFFICIAL BRITISH STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S JAN 12 REMARKS ON THE HORN. HE DID NOT HAVE TEXT OF BRITISH STATEMENT AT RESIDENCE, WHERE HE WAS DRAFTING TELEGRAM, BUT HE RECALLED THAT IT WAS QUITE MILD. DAY IS SUGGESTING THAT HIS PROTEST, IF AUTHORIZED, BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER FORSEC DAVID OWEN HAS HAD HIS MEETING IN LONDON WITH MOFA PERSEC DAWIT, SCHEDULED FOR JAN 18, AND HAS PRESUMABLY MADE INITIAL PROTEST.

2. DESPITE THIS RECOMMENDATION, DAY SEES DAWIT -- AND INDEED FONMIN FELLEKE, HIMSELF -- AS BEING "PRETTY POWERLESS" IN PRESENT SITUATION. HE SEES, AND WE AGREE, THAT FELLEKE AND MOFA MODERATES CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO RISK NECKS BY PLEADING FOR DECENT RELATIONS WITH WEST, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE REASONABLY GOOD AT REPORTING WESTERN POSITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS. REGARDING FELLEKE, HIS GOOD FRIEND YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR VOJINOVIC, TOLD CHARGE JUST THIS WEEK THAT HE IS A "COURAGEOUS MAN" IN A GREAT DEAL OF DANGER. MEN LIKE DAWIT AND BERHANE DERESSE (AMERICAN AFFAIRS) MAY HAVE MORE PERSUASIVE POWER IN DIRG THAN FELLEKE, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN GONE FOR A LONG TIME FROM ADDIS, AND THEIR PRESENT INFLUENCE HAS TO BE TESTED AGAIN. AYALWE'S INFLUENCE CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO COUNT FOR A LOT NOWADAYS.

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3. QUESTION ARISES, THEREFORE, WHETHER TIME HAS NOT COME, AT LEAST IN CRITICAL MATTERS, FOR WESTERNERS TO DEAL MORE FREQUENTLY AND DIRECTLY WITH MAJOR BERHANU BAYEIT, PMAC MEMBER IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BRITISH AMBASSADOR SEES FELLEKE AS HOPING WE WILL GET HIM AND MOFA COLLEAGUES OFF THE HOOK BY GOING DIRECTLY TO DIRG. DEPT WILL RECALL BERHANU BAYEH TOLD ME AT FIRST MEETING -- JUST PRIOR TO CHARGE TIENKEN'S DEPARTURE -- THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS BE WILLING TO SEE ME. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER SUCH IS STILL THE CASE, BUT EMBASSY WILL CERTAINLY WISH TO TAKE UP HIS OFFER AS NEED FOR HIGH LEVEL DEMARCHES MATERIALIZES. IF WE SENSE WE ARE ON COLLISION COURSE -- NOT QUITE YET -- THEN ONLY A MEETING WITH MENGISTU COULD HOPE TO SAVE OUR PRESENCE HERE.

4. BRITISH AMBASSADOR STILL FINDS IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS REALLY WANT WEST ENTIRELY OUT OF ETHIOPIA, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THEIR ALREADY FAST MELTING PRESTIGE AMONG OTHER AFRICANS TO WHOM THEY STILL PREACH THEIR INTEREST SOLELY IN INDEPENDENCE, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT SOVIETS (AND CUBANS) MAY WANT ETHIOPIA TO REDUCE OUR

WESTERN PRESENCE AND ABILITY TO OBSERVE THEIR ACTIVITIES
WITHOUT ELIMINATING EVERY TIE TO THE WEST.

5. BRITISH AMBASSADOR BROUGHT UP POSSIBILITY OF RELYING
MORE ON YUGOSLAVS TO PROMOTE CONTINUATION OF WESTERN PRESENCE
IN ETHIOPIA SINCE SUCH TIES ARE IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR
THEOLOGY OF NON-ALIGNMENT. DEPT WILL RECALL EMBASSY BELGRADE'S
SUGGESTION ALONG THOSE LINES, AN IDEA BOTH BRITISH AND AMER-
ICAN EMBASSIES IN ADDIS THINK IS WORTH PURSUING, BUT IT
SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO GUARANTEE SUCCESS.
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